



# News Release

Arizona Ecological Services Field Office  
2321 W. Royal Palm Road, Suite 103  
Phoenix, Arizona 85021  
602/242-0210  
602/242-2513 (Fax)

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[www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/)

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Contact: Tamara Ward 703/358-2512  
Mima Falk 520/670-6150 x225

## U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE RELEASES ANNUAL LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT -- One Arizona-Utah Plant Added to List --

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today released its Candidate Notice of Review, a yearly appraisal of the current status of plants and animals that are candidates for protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Two species have been removed from candidate status, one species has been added, and 11 have a change in priority from the last review in December 2007. There are now 251 species recognized by the Service as candidates for ESA protection.

As part of this review, the Service is soliciting additional information on these candidate species, as well as information on species that may be eligible for addition to future candidate updates. This information will be valuable in preparing listing documents and future revisions or supplements to the notice of review.

“We strongly encourage collaborative conservation efforts for all candidate species from Federal agencies, Tribes, and private organizations,” said Service Director H. Dale Hall. “The Service will continue to offer technical and financial assistance to support these efforts.”

Candidate species do not receive protection under the ESA, although the Service works to conserve them. Identification of candidate species provides resource managers with advance notice of species in need of conservation, allowing them to address threats before the species is listed.

The two species removed from candidate status are the Ogden mountainsnail, a mollusk species found in Utah, and the Florida indigo, a plant species native to tropical regions. The Service removed these species after new scientific information led to changes in taxonomy. As a result, both species have been found to be more widespread than once believed.

Today’s notice also identifies one new candidate species, the Gierisch mallow, a plant species found in Arizona and Utah. The Gierisch mallow is a recently described (2002), perennial, orange-flowered plant that grows up to 3.4 feet tall. It is found only on gypsum outcrops in northern Mohave County, Ariz. and southern Washington County, Utah. There are nine known populations occupying less than 60 acres – seven populations on Bureau of Land Management and one on Arizona State Land Department administered land in Arizona, and 2.5 acres of BLM land in Utah.

Primary threats to the mallow include gypsum mining, which has occurred at the location of the two largest populations in Arizona, and off-road vehicle use.

All candidates for addition to the federal list of endangered and threatened wildlife and plants are assigned a listing priority number based on the magnitude and imminence of the threats they face. When discretionary funding becomes available, the Service addresses species with the highest listing priority numbers first. The 11 changes in listing priority announced in today's notice are based on new information in the updated assessments of continuing candidates. Four species have had their priority increased while seven species have had their priority lowered. The net result of these changes is the new number of candidates assigned to the top priority category for listing (i.e., full species facing threats of high magnitude that are imminent) will change from the current number, 100, to 99.

The Service has several tools for protecting candidate species and their habitat, including a grants program that funds conservation projects by private landowners, states and territories. In addition, the Service can enter into Candidate Conservation Agreements (CCA), formal agreements between the Service and one or more parties to address the conservation needs of proposed or candidate species, or species likely to become candidates, before they become listed as endangered or threatened. The CCA participants voluntarily commit to implementing specific actions that will remove or reduce the threats to these species, thereby contributing to stabilizing or restoring the species.

The complete notice and list of proposed and candidate species appears in today's Federal Register and can be found online at <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/candidates/index.html>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Photographs of the Gierisch mallow are available by contacting Jeff Humphrey at 602-242-0210 x222 or [jeff\\_humphrey@fws.gov](mailto:jeff_humphrey@fws.gov).